

Agenda Report

June 20, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Water and Power Department
SUBJECT: ADOPT A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE APPLICATION FOR A WATERSHED MANAGEMENT GRANT FROM THE UNITED STATES BUREAU OF RECLAMATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to Section 21065 of CEQA and Sections 15060 (c)(2), 15060 (c)(3), and 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines and, as such, no environmental document pursuant to CEQA is required for the project;
2. Adopt a resolution to authorize the City of Pasadena Water and Power Department ("PWP") to apply for a grant from the United States Department of the Interior - Bureau of Reclamation ("USBR") in an amount not to exceed \$200,000 for a Watershed Management Program; and
3. Designate the City Manager, or their designee, as the authorized representative with signature authority for the grant agreement and all contract documents pursuant to this grant.

BACKGROUND:

The U.S. Department of the Interior's WaterSMART (Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow) Program provides a framework for Federal leadership and assistance to stretch existing water supplies and secure new supplies for future generations. Through WaterSMART, USBR leverages Federal and non-Federal funding to work cooperatively with states, Tribes, and local entities to increase water supply sustainability through investments in existing infrastructure and attention to local water conflicts.

The WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Grant ("CWMP") is made available through USBR to provide funding for watershed group development and restoration planning activities that promote water reliability and cooperation between stakeholders to facilitate solutions to water issues.

On March 31, 2022, PWP submitted an application for a CWMP to fund the establishment of a watershed group to develop a restoration and outreach plan for the Arroyo Seco Watershed. The application was submitted prior to the City Council's approval due to the short time-frame between the call for applications and the March 31, 2022 submission deadline. USBR requires a resolution to accompany the grant submittal, to be submitted by June 30, 2022.

Watershed Group and Restoration Plan

On October 4, 2021, City Council adopted the Water System and Resources Plan ("WSRP"), which defines targeted goals and objectives to promote water stewardship and improve local resources. One of the specific goals (Goal #3) of the plan is to *Foster Watershed Stewardship and Environmental Health*. Watershed management and environmental health priorities play an important role in maintaining the health and availability of all water resources, whether locally or where supply originates. Prudent stewardship can maintain, and even increase, the volume of surface water available for direct use or recharge of the Raymond Basin aquifer, from which Pasadena gets approximately 30-35 percent of its water supply.

A key objective identified in the WSRP is to manage and protect the local Arroyo Seco and Eaton Wash watersheds to achieve greater stream flow capability and groundwater recharge. This objective includes development of programs to create and enhance natural habitat growth of native plants for sediment control.

Through this grant opportunity PWP seeks to develop an equitable, diverse, and active watershed group of invested stakeholders and community members. The focus of the Watershed Group will be on developing innovative solutions for native habitat restoration and conservation, removal of invasive species, promoting water supply reliability, conserving natural habitat, and promoting community education of environmental practices to improve the health and viability of the watershed.

This two-year program will enlist the engagement of various stakeholders including Outward Bound and the One Arroyo Foundation (formerly the Arroyo Advisory Group ("AAG")). The AAG, formed in 2017, developed a vision for the City's stewardship and support for the region. PWP's new Watershed Group will use the AAG's final report to assess the current needs of the Arroyo watershed and recruit and engage residents and stakeholders to support the preservation of this diverse and vital ecosystem.

The Watershed Group will evaluate AAG's original vision to ensure applicability and develop an equitable and inclusive outreach program to recruit and engage members of diverse backgrounds. Participants will inventory and gather data to better understand the watershed's current ecosystem and long-term needs. They will compare AAG's report to the current native landscape to develop a restoration plan that defines the goals and objectives needed to promote water reliability, promote diversification and accessibility, and environmental practices to protect native habitats.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The recommended grant authorization is consistent with the City Council's Strategic Planning Goals to: maintain fiscal responsibility and stability; and increase conservation and sustainability. The program is consistent with the 2020 Water System and Resources Plan and 2010 Urban Water Management Plan.

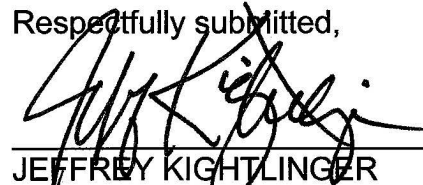
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The application for and utilization of grant funds to develop a watershed group and restoration plan is a government fiscal activity that does not involve commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment. Therefore, the proposed action is not a "project" subject to CEQA, as defined in Section 21065 of CEQA and Sections 15060 (c)(2), 15060 (c)(3), and 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Since the action is not a project subject to CEQA, no environmental document is required.

FISCAL IMPACT:

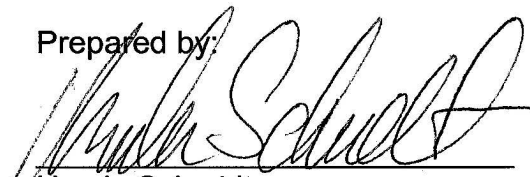
There is no fiscal impact to the recommended action to adopt the resolution. If grant funding is awarded, staff will seek corresponding increases to the Water Fund budgets for up to \$200,000.

Respectfully submitted,



JEFFREY KIGHTLINGER
Interim General Manager
Water and Power Department

Prepared by:



Ursula Schmidt
Water Conservation Programs Manager

Approved by



CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
Interim City Manager